

Birth of television

From Mr Leslie Mitchell

Sir, With reference to the article from New York by Christopher Thomas, "Bell, Marconi, but Baird?" (March 26), I was always convinced that it was Baird who first produced an acceptable likeness on a television screen. I myself appeared for him in the company of Dame Marie Tempest at a demonstration at Selfridges in 1933, and introduced a programme from the BBC building in Portland Place on closed circuit, when I became a radio announcer.

In those early days the picture was clear and detailed, but any deviation from centre caused ominous and disturbing swellings of cheek, chin or forehead.

I met Baird on many occasions when I was appointed Senior Television Announcer for the world's first regular TV Service at Alexandra Palace in 1936. Programmes were transmitted alternately, afternoon and evenings, by Baird and Marconi EMI. A disastrous fire at Baird's Crystal Palace studios finally decided the issue of who should be given the contact for the future.

Vladimir Zworykin was, of course, closely connected with television research in the USA before the war, but Baird undoubtedly produced the first detailed picture-quality on the screen.

Yours faithfully,
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